

larger amount. This was a sample of the complaints made by the old commissioners, and one of the points on which had been effected a large economy. He was of opinion that if they could go on free from the "obstruction" of the old commissioners, they might still further succeed in reducing the expenditure, and he now moved that the sum of £471. be agreed to.

Mr. Leslie said, of all the ignorance he had ever heard in that court, nothing equalled what had just fallen from Mr. Chadwick. And what had called forth this philippic? They had signed a cheque for a certain amount, and they merely asked what it was for. They found items in the sheet for contracts for flushing, and other charges that they believed did not properly come under the head of "wages," and they required explanation.

Mr. Byng said he thought that it was quite useless for any commissioner to attend who was not on the Works Committee. The Works Committee governed the commission, and the rest of the Commissioners were perfect ciphers, who were treated with contempt.

Dr. Southwood Smith pointed out that wherever the cholera had been received in groups, were found indications of neglect of that which it was the object of this commission to remove, while localities had altogether escaped that had been properly cleansed. He greatly regretted that more had not been done; but to say that nothing had been done was a great misrepresentation, as there was a considerable improvement in the removal of filth over the former method.

After further discussion, the following resolution was carried:—"That the weekly sheet be printed, with the items of the work done, and of the former charges of the like work, and an account of the charges which any of the items may be intended to reduce, so far as such information can be obtained in the course of a week from this day."

The New Sewers Amendment Act.—On the recommendations of the Works Committee being brought forward,

Mr. Leslie said, before they went into the recommendations of the Works Committee, it would be as well first to ascertain whether that committee had any legal existence. He held in his hand a Bill that he was told was a Government measure, brought forward on their own responsibility by his friend Lord Ebrington. It contained a clause to give the Works Committee power to do what they were doing at the time he entered his protest. The Works Committee, however, went on the principle that a majority of the commissioners could decide all questions; but some of them feeling an uneasiness of conscience, went to Parliament to ask for the extraordinary powers contained in the fourth clause of the new Bill. (Mr. Leslie then read the clause giving the committee power to transact any business falling within a certain class without being first brought before the court, and, in fact, nearly to usurp the entire functions of the court.) This power had been sought behind the backs of the commissioners, who had never been informed of it, and the clause had very properly been struck out by the House of Commons.

Mr. Byng remarked that this Bill had been brought into the House of Commons without the commissioners, or even the clerk, being consulted upon it. The Bill had been smuggled into the house under the care of its godfathers, Lord Ashley and Lord Ebrington, and yet fourteen of its clauses had been struck out.*

On the next recommendation of the same committee, that two additional assistant-surveyors be appointed,

Mr. Leslie protested against adding to the array of officers that he then saw before him, who were in attendance on Committee A on Monday, Committee B on Tuesday, and some "fid fid" for every day in the week, instead of attending to their duties. In fact, they had now arrived at such a point that he was determined the Chadwick system should no longer go on, but that it should be exposed and put a stop to. He had had eighteen months' trial, which had proved his utter incompetency for the management of that commission.

Mr. Chadwick denied that he controlled the business of the commission, but he objected that in the interval of the intermittent courts the business of the commission should be brought to a stand. He then read a passage from the report of the Sanitary Commissioners in support of his opinion. Every step on the part of the old commissioners and old officers was one of retraction of principle and opinions of years.

The motion was then put and agreed to.

A report was presented by Mr. Grant, on the subject of offensive drainage in the neighbourhood of the Blackfriars-road, complained of recently by a deputation that attended the court. The report stated that in the immediate neighbourhood horses were skinned and boiled for dogs' meat, and that in one yard were seven dead horses that would be boiled in one night, and the refuse from them cast

into the sewer in Friar-street, which was 1 ft. 10 in. lower than the sewer in the Blackfriars-road, which was a sort of *cui de sac*, and filled with gases of the most deadly character,—so much so, that a brick-layer going into it was ill for eighteen hours, and that it was impossible to get a lighted candle 15 inches below the pavement. The sewer was 5 feet 3 inches by 2 feet 3 inches, and the deposit in it was from 2 to 3 feet in depth. As a temporary measure, the report recommended trapping the house drains.

The report led to a long conversation, in which an opinion was expressed that these sewers would form a favourable means for a trial of Mr. Goldworthy Gurney's plan for draining off the soil air by means of a steam-jet, and decomposing the same by fire and chemical appliances. The surveyor was directed to communicate with Mr. Gurney on the subject, and the report was received.

A letter was received from the solicitor to Mr. Rains, on the subject of the Bermondsey mill-streams, to inquire whether the commissioners would be disposed to take the remainder of the streams, making his client a proper compensation for the same,—that Mr. Rains would offer every facility for the same,—and suggested as the basis of an arrangement, the value of the land taken, and what it would cost to make the mill as efficient by steam as water power, including the cost of another steam-engine. (Cool enough!)

The subject was referred to the surveyors, and it was mentioned incidentally, that the son of Mr. Rains had, within a few days, been fatally attacked, and had fallen a victim to the cholera.

The next business was to make rates on the following districts, viz.—Western division of Westminster Sewers, Counters Creek district, and Poplar district.

The subjoined is an abstract of the old and new rate:—

| | Amount of Rate. | Collected. | New Rate. |
|------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| Westminster division .. | £17,730 7 6 | £17,504 15 6 | £19,000 0 0 |
| Counters Creek district | 8,755 3 4 | 3,667 2 10 | 4,747 18 6 |
| Poplar | 3,138 2 0 | 3,121 3 0 | 3,823 0 3 |

The collection averaged 97½ per cent.

A long acrimonious conversation ensued on the proposition that Mr. Joseph Smith should report on the borings for the purpose of the proposed tunnel scheme, which was agreed to.

A communication was received from the visiting justices of Tothill-fields prison, on the drainage of that locality, and a report upon it was presented by Mr. Gotto, the surveyor, recommending a rearrangement of the internal drainage, and a removal of a portion of the prisoners, as it was originally intended only to receive 500, but recently no less than 800 persons had been crammed within it. Eleven fatal cases of cholera had taken place there—9 males and 2 females. Report agreed to.

A vast mass of other business was brought forward, and, after a sitting of nearly six hours, and the exhibition of much unpleasant feeling, the court adjourned.

The court met again on Thursday last, the Rev. W. Stone in the chair. It was resolved, on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, that Mr. Hatton be permanently appointed clerk of accounts, at a salary of 350*l.* per annum, to commence from Midsummer last.

A lengthy document was received from the inhabitants of South Lambeth, setting forth that cholera had broken out in that district, caused, as they believed, by open drainage and the nuisance arising from the Effra river, from which exhaled the most noxious effluvia. Referred to the surveyors.

A letter was received from Sir George Grey, Secretary of State for the Home Department, enclosing a document from Mr. Baker, one of the coroners for Middlesex, on the subject of a complaint made by the guardians of the poor of St. Mary's, Whitechapel, that he was in the habit of holding unnecessary inquests on persons who had died of cholera, and justifying their necessity at the present moment more than ever. Several commissioners expressed their opinion upon the document, and Dr. Southwood Smith declared that no inquests had been held without good effects and valuable information elicited; that the greatest neglect had been shown by the guardians of the Whitechapel Union, on the outbreak of the cholera; and that but it not been for the influence of Mr. Baker, used for two hours, the jury in a particular case would have returned a verdict of manslaughter against them.

The letter was referred to the Works Committee. The following resolution of the Works Committee was proposed for adoption:—

"That, in consequence of the receipt by the commissioners of various suggestions for the sewage of the metropolitan districts, this committee recommend the court to refer to this committee, for their consideration and report, the plans by Mr. Austin and Mr. Phillips, and all other plans suggested; and also to order that, till further order, this committee be, after August 20, 1849, open to all the commissioners."

A warm discussion ensued upon this subject, in which the Hon. Frederick Byng, Mr. Leslie, Mr. Chadwick, Mr. Lawes, Mr. Bullar, and Captain Dawson took part; and, after a good deal of opposition on some points, it was finally agreed to.

A report was presented by Mr. Grant on the drainage of Richmond, with various suggestions for its sanitary improvement, and that it should be declared two divisions, under the titles of the Sherin and Richmond divisions, and a special sewer rate raised for the improvement of the same. Agreed to.

A long report was presented on the prevalence of cholera in various parts of Southwark, particularly in the neighbourhood of Tooley-street and St. George's-road, attributing those cases that had occurred in the latter to the improper emptying of cess-pools by hand, which opinion was coincided in by the coroner's jury, who gave it as their opinion that this course had only aggravated the evils it was intended to check.

The matter was ordered to be immediately attended to by the surveyors.

A weekly balance-sheet, ordered to be printed at the last court, was presented, and upon this Mr. Leslie took the opportunity of repudiating the assertions of waste on the part of the old commissioners, and denying the large economy stated to have accrued from the system of flushing by Mr. Chadwick, and that the returns presented as the charge for flushing were false, and did not include several large items that were incurred for carting away the refuse left by the flushes, and he intimated that three commissioners would call for a special court to investigate the whole question. The question was adjourned.

Just as the court was about to rise, a Mr. Hawkins rose and addressed the commissioners, and having made some inquiries as to permission to present a plan for the drainage of London, addressed Mr. Chadwick, threw his card on the table, and expressed his determination of meeting him on the 20th instant, when he would prove that he (Mr. C.) had obstructed measures of improvement, and that he would expose the schemes and intrigues that had been going on. The court expressed their determination not to be made the vehicle of such communications. Mr. Hawkins then abruptly retired.

Miscellaneous.

HOISTING APPARATUS AT BRITANNIA-BRIDGE.—The lifting of the tube lately laid down at the pier has probably by this time begun. The Bramah's hydraulic presses, by the power of which this work is to be done, are noble instruments. The largest has a cylinder 11 inches thick, with a piston or ram 20 inches in diameter, and the lift a span of 6 feet. The weight of the cylinder is sixteen tons,—of the whole machine forty tons. This one alone has power enough to lift the whole, a weight, it is estimated, equivalent to that of 30,000 men. It would spout the water pressed into its cylinder to a height of nearly 20,000 feet, according to Mr. Clark, or more than five times the height of Snowdon, or 5,000 feet higher than Mont Blanc. And yet any one man can "put a hook into the nose of (this) Leviathan," and, alone with him, with the utmost facility and precision, guide and control his stupendous action. There are two of smaller power, with rams 15 inches in diameter. These are placed side by side on the top of the Britannia Tower, and act in conjunction with the larger, which stands at the same level on a tower adjoining. The chains descending to the tube below, are like those of an ordinary suspension bridge, in eight and nine links alternately. The weight of one of these alone is about 100 tons, or more than that great "lift," the duke's statue, at Hyde-park-corner. They are attached to the rams by iron yokes, or cross heads, of great thickness. The two chains pass through square holes at each end, and are gripped at the top by clamps or cheeks, of wrought-iron, screwed like a vice. At the lower end the chains are attached to the tube, or rather to lifting frames within its extremities, by three sets of massive cast-iron beams, crossing one above another, and secured by wrought-iron straps, passing over the upper pair, and descending into the bottom cells, where they are keyed. The ends of the chains fit under deep shoulders or notches in the lifting frames, where they are secured by screw bolts. These lifting frames and beams add other 200 tons to the weight to be lifted. As the tube rises, it is to be wedged till the masonry is filled in every lift of six feet, so that the process will be slow.

* The principal heads of the new Act will be found in another part of our present number.—E. G.